

SEALY HOME (15 STILES CIRCLE)
15 Stiles Circle
Oklahoma City
Oklahoma County
Oklahoma

HABS No. OK-49

HABS
OKLA,
15 - OKLA,
B -

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Rocky Mountain Regional Office
Department of the Interior
P.O. Box 25287
Denver, Colorado 80225

SEALY HOME (15 STILES CIRCLE) HABS No. OK-49

Location:

15 Stiles Circle, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma
(Maywood Addition to Oklahoma City, Blk 14, lot 18)

Present Owner:

Oklahoma City Urban Renewal Authority

Present Occupant:

Vacant

Statement of Significance:

The Sealy Home, named for the first occupant, is architecturally significant as a rare type of housing style in Oklahoma City. It is a Prairie/Four Square type of house, with unusually dominant brick columns extending from the ground level to the second floor roof line. Adding to the unique quality of the home is the use of contrasting, polychrome brick detail.

In May of 1985 this home was declared eligible for the National Register of Historic Places by the State Historic Preservation Office.

HISTORICAL INFORMATION

Date of Erection:

Circa 1916

Architect:

Unknown

Historical Narrative:

Maywood Addition, located only a few blocks from the downtown business district of Oklahoma City, was platted in 1892, only three years after the land run that opened the territory to non-Indian settlement. One unusual feature in the addition was a diagonal street which terminated in a European-style circle with a park in the middle and lots around the perimeter. As late as 1915 these lots around Stiles Circle were still undeveloped.

Although the warranty deed and mortgage deed records are unclear, the house at 15 Stiles Circle may have been built by developer Ulysses Baughman, who also was president of the Oklahoma Mortgage Loan Company. Baughman's name would remain on the warranty deed until 1920, but in the 1917 city directory the occupants were listed as Albert H. and Laura Sealy. Sealy, a salesman with a department store, would remain in the house until 1920, when Baughman sold it for \$6,500 to Mrs. Kittie Hunnicutt. Again, it may have been purchased as rental property, for the occupants in the 1921 directory were listed as A.L. and Margeurite Iviex.

In February of 1921 the house was sold to Mrs. L.J. Rexroat, the first owner occupant, for \$7,750. She sold the house a year later to Alf Harris, a collector with the Internal Revenue Service. Thereafter, the names on the warranty deed records do not correspond with the occupant records, indicating that it was used as rental property.

In the mid-1930s the house was vacant for six years, then was converted to a multi-family dwelling with the Re-Nu-U Beauty Shop on the first floor. By World War II the neighborhood was predominantly black in a segregated city.

The house and neighborhood gradually deteriorated until it was declared an urban renewal district. Today, the house is a badly damaged shell, an unsafe haven even for the pigeons that roost in the loft.

Biographical Information:

Little is known about the builder or occupants of this house. From fragmentary information, the builder may have been Ulysses Baughman, who was president of the Oklahoma Mortgage Loan Company. Otherwise, little is known about him.

Albert Sealy was a middle class salesman, and most of the successive occupants ranged from bricklayers and widows to managers and salesmen. Little is known about any of them.

ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

1. Architectural Merit and Interest: The Sealy Building is of architectural merit based on the locally unique combination of Prairie/Four Square configuration and contrasting, polychrome use of brick.

2. Condition of Fabric: The exterior is in an extreme state of deterioration, with most windows boarded over, doors kicked in, and brick vandalized. The interior is in worse condition, with walls partially demolished, floor joists exposed, and trim features destroyed. (To be demolished).

3. Summary Description: The Sealy Home is a symmetrically square type structure, two stories tall, with a brick veneer. The front elevation is unique with three massive brick columns that extend from ground level to the roof line. Each column, as well as each doorway, window, and corner, is framed by decorative use of light brick against a field of darker brick. All three columns are topped by wooden pedestals. The second floor porch, which extends from the house to the columns, is enclosed by a wooden balustrade. A similar rail may have enclosed the first floor of the porch, but it is no longer in place. The other elevations are characterized by symmetrical arrangement of double-hung sash windows, horizontal bands of decorative brick, and the decorative brick around the windows. At some time in the past a frame addition was built onto the rear of the structure, but it did not even resemble the original design. Today, it is in poor condition.

In general, the facade is in extremely poor condition, suffering from numerous alterations in the past, gradual deterioration, and vandalism.

Detailed Description of Exterior

1. Foundation: Reinforced concrete
2. Wall Construction: Walls are framed with brick veneer.
3. Porches: Virtually the entire front facade is spanned by two porches, one on the first level, the other on the second level. The porches, decked with tongue and groove slats, extend from the wall to three brick columns which extend from ground level to the roof line.
4. Openings, Doorways, and Windows: Doors on the front facade lead to the two porches. Windows are placed symmetrically on all four sides, and all were wooden, double-hung sash. All openings and corners are framed with decorative brick work.
5. Roof: The roof is a hip and valley, but the frame addition to the rear of the original structure adds incongruous gables on either side of the house.

Detailed Description of Interior

1. Floor Plans: The original house had a symmetrical arrangement of rooms. The front entryway, offset to the left, lead to a living area to the right, a hallway straight ahead, and a stairway to the left. Behind the living area was a dining room, which lead to a kitchen along the back of the dwelling. On the other side of the downstairs were a bedroom and bathroom. Upstairs, three bedrooms and a bathroom were arranged in the four corners.

2. Flooring: Original floors probably were covered with hardwood. Today, plywood covers what is left of the flooring.

3. Walls and Ceilings: Original walls were lathe and plaster, probably covered with canvas or paper.

4. Trim: Little original trim remains. What survives is plain, undistinguished millwork.

Site and Surroundings:

1. Orientation and General Setting: The Sealy Home faces the old Stiles Park Circle, so it is not on a true north-south, east-west axis. The front elevation faces due southwest toward the downtown business district along Harrison Avenue. Originally, the houses around the park faced each other, a rare configuration for Oklahoma City with its generally rigid grid pattern of housing additions. Today, urban renewal has cleared all surrounding houses, leaving only two residential homes and one church building on the circle.

Sources of Project Information

As part of an urban renewal project, the neighborhood surrounding the Sealy Home was surveyed by Entourage, Inc., of San Antonio, Texas, in 1984. The published document was "Harrison-Walnut Historic Survey Report, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, A History." Copies are deposited in the Oklahoma Historic Preservation Office, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. Another, more limited survey was conducted in 1985 by city consultant, Sandra Stratton, who partially completed a nomination to the National Register of Historic Places for the Sealy Home.

Bibliography:

- Warranty Deed and Mortgage Deed Records, Oklahoma County Courthouse, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma
- City Directories, 1914-1919, Metropolitan Library, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma
- City Directories, 1920-1982, Oklahoma Historical Society, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma
- Bob L. Blackburn, Heart of the Promised Land: An Illustrated History of Oklahoma County (Los Angeles: Windsor Publications, 1982).
- Jim Edwards and Hall Ottoway, The Vanished Splendor: Postcard Views of Historic Oklahoma City (Oklahoma City: Abalache Books, 1983).

Prepared by: Bob L. Blackburn, Ph.D.
Historical Consultant
126 N.W. 22nd
Oklahoma City, OK
September, 1986